

Serial No.: 09/457,049

Attorney Docket No.: 1999P07399US01In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 6 and 16 as follows. All pending claims are shown.

1. (currently amended) A method for enabling a caller to locate a called party using a computer system comprising:
providing a contact list manager (10) in which a called party can store a contact list (22) of two or more contacts; and
upon receiving a request to locate a called party, referring to said contact list to automatically attempt to locate said called party, wherein said automatically attempt to locate said called party comprises:

automatically sending, by said computer system, a message via a first contact method toward, at least, a person other than said called party, said first contact method associated with a contact in said contact list, said message requesting location information regarding said called party;

receiving a response to said message from said person, said person being other than said caller, said response indicating a second contact method, other than said first contact method, for attempting to reach said called party; and

automatically processing the response to facilitate use of said second contact method to attempt to reach said called party.

2. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said contact list manager further comprises:
one or more contact methods (22a) for each contact; and
one or more rules (24a) applicable to contacts and contact methods regarding when or how to send a locator request.

3. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said one

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or more contact methods is one or more methods selected from the group consisting of:

- one or more telephone numbers,
- one or more fax numbers,
- one or more pager numbers,
- one or more cell phone numbers, and
- one or more e-mail addresses.

4. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said contact list database stores additional contact information designating the conditions for usage of said contacts or said contact methods.

5. (previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein said automatically attempting to locate said called party comprises:

- automatically sending one or more messages to parties listed in a contact list requesting location information regarding said called party,

- receiving responses to said one or more messages and presenting a response to a calling party; and

- canceling outstanding messages when a response is received.

6. (currently amended) A method for locating a called party comprising:

- receiving a single request to locate a called party;

- automatically sending, in response to said single request, messages to multiple parties listed in a contact list requesting location information regarding said called party;

- canceling outstanding messages when a response is received to said messages, said response being from a person, said response being from other than said called party, and said response including location information regarding said called party; and

- presenting said response to a calling party.

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7. (original) The method according to claim 6 further comprising: allowing a called party to configure said contact list.

8. (canceled)

9. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein a called party is identified and identities of called parties are used in part to determine system behavior.

10. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein said called party may configure system behavior for a calling party.

11. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein said messages are predetermined prior to receiving said request.

12. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the parties on the contact list may submit responses to said messages with information regarding the called party.

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein:

the calling party is automatically notified of said responses,

said responses contain a contact method for reaching the called party,

the called party may cancel the called party location process at any time including automatically canceling, expiring and/or recalling all dispatched messages.

14. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein said messages may be automatically cancelled expired or recalled based on a timer.

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15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6 wherein said messages may be automatically cancelled, expired or recalled based on the successful establishment of a contact between said calling party and said called party.

16. (currently amended) An apparatus for automatically locating a called party comprising:

a contact list manager (10) in which a called party can store a list (22) of two or more contacts;

a configuration interface (18);

a locator (60) capable of sending out location request messages, in response to invocation by a calling party who is seeking to locate said called party, and receiving and handling responses, wherein a response by a person other than said calling party, to a location request message sent to a first destination (22a), indicates a second destination which is to be subsequently called to reach the called party, and said first and second destinations are of different multimedia types.

17. (original) An apparatus according to claim 16 further comprising:

one or more contact lists (22) associated with one or more called parties; and

one or more rule sets (24) associated with one or more called parties.

18. (original) An apparatus according to claim 16 further comprising:

one or more system or group contact lists (12) providing contacts that are applicable to more than one called party; and

one or more system or group rule sets (14) applicable to more than one called party.

19. (original) An apparatus according to claim 16 further comprising:

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an interface for receiving one or more responses (64) to location requests; and

an presentation module (65) for presenting responses to a caller.

20. (original) An apparatus according to claim 16 further comprising:

a cancellation module (66) for determining when to cancel outstanding messages and sending cancellation requests.

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said second contact method includes a telephone number that is entered in full in response to said message by a responding party.

22. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said second contact method includes a telephone number, and said first contact method includes an e-mail address.

23. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said automatically processing the response comprises automatically extracting said second contact method from said response.

24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23 wherein said first contact method is a telephone number, said second contact method is a telephone number spoken verbally by a responding party via telephone, and said automatically extracting said second contact method from said response includes using speech recognition software to extract said second contact method.

25. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said automatically processing the response comprises automatically extracting said second contact method using optical

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recognition software.

26. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said automatically processing the response comprises recording said second contact method and playing the response for said caller.

27. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said automatically attempt to locate said called party is capable of concurrently sending messages to each of at least two contacts of said two or more contacts in response to a single request to locate a called party.

28. (previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein said automatically attempting to locate said called party comprises:

automatically sending multiple messages to parties listed in a contact list requesting location information regarding said called party;

receiving responses to one or more of said multiple messages and presenting a response to a calling party; and

canceling outstanding messages when a response is received.

29. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6 further comprising receiving a response to one of said messages, said one of said messages having been sent via a first contact method, said response including location information including a second contact method having a number or address that is manually or verbally entered by a responding party to indicate location of said called party, wherein said first and second contact methods are of different multimedia types.

30. (previously presented) A method according to claim 29 wherein one of said first and second contact methods is a telephone call and another of said first and second contact

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methods is a text-based messaging.

31. (previously presented) A method according to claim 30 wherein said first contact method is a telephone number, said second contact method is entered verbally by a responding party via telephone, and said automatically extracting said second contact method from said response includes using speech recognition software to extract said second contact method.

32. (previously presented) A method according to claim 29 further comprising automatically extracting said second contact method from said response.

33. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein one of said first and second destinations is a number for a telephone and another of said first and second contact methods is an address for text-based messaging.

34. (canceled)

35. (previously presented) A method according to claim 32 wherein said number or address includes a phone number for telephone calls or an address that handles communication including text-based communication.